

Red Shank

Adenostoma sparsifolium

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau

Shape/Size

Shrub or small tree 6 to 18 feet tall. Bark is reddish brown and peels in ribbon-like strips.

Leaves

Small linear leaves $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long.

Flower/Fruit

Tiny white or pinkish flowers blooming in July and August.

Range

Closely related to chamise, but much more limited in disjunct populations on dry slopes and mesas below 6,000 feet in the Santa Monica Mountains as well as other areas outside of Los Angeles County.

Flammability – High.

Maintenance

Stump sprouts from burls and readily generates from seed after fire. Recommend limbing and lifting canopies and thinning out dead and live material. Maintain canopy for soil erosion. Should be removed where adjacent to structures.



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes



Redberry

Rhamnus crocea

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Dense shrub 3 to 6 feet tall.

Leaves

Leaves ½ to 1 inch long, often in bundles, dark green, leathery, and with serrated edges.

Flower/Fruit

Inconspicuous green flower clusters, blooming February to April. Fruit is a red berry smaller than ¼ inch.

Range

Locally common shrub of the chaparral and coastal sage plant communities.

Flammability – Low to Moderate depending on fuel moisture availability.

Maintenance

Recommend removal of dead material and pruning to lift canopy off the ground.



Scrub Oak

Quercus spp.

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Shrub 3 to 12 feet, occasionally tree-like with multiple trunks. Branches are stiff and brown.

Leaves

1 inch long, oblong in shape with spine tipped edges. Upper surface is green, shiny and hairless. Underside is whitish with scattered minute hairs.

Flower/Fruit

Small catkins growing on a stem-like structure with flowers radiating down all sides. Blooms March to May. Fruit is an acorn, maturing in the fall.

Range

Numerous species range from the coastal slopes to the desert up to 5,000 feet.

Flammability – Moderate to high.

Maintenance

Recommended maintenance includes limbing up from the ground, selective thinning of live foliage and removal of all deadwood. An oak tree permit is usually required to do any maintenance with the exception of deadwood removal and thinning of live vegetation less than 2 inches in diameter.



Photo by John Aimes



Sugar Bush

Rhus ovata

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Large spreading, mounding shrub or small tree 15 to 20 feet high and as wide.

Leaves

Simple, dark green, leathery and pointed. 2 to 4 inch long with smooth margins.

Flower/Fruit

Showy cream and pink flowers occur in the spring. Fruit is a red berry with a sugar coating.

Range

Occurs throughout Los Angeles County from the coastal zone to interior foothill areas.

Flammability – Low to moderate.

Maintenance

Should be maintained free of dead material and limbed off the ground. This species can often be pruned or trained into attractive multi-trunked shrubs or small trees.

Sugar Bush should be left on site unless a large continuous stand is present. In these cases, selective removal to provide a break in fuel continuity is desirable. This plant is valuable as an aid for erosion control.



Toyon, Christmas Berry, California Holly

Heteromeles arbutifolia

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by Tim Knorr



Photo by Tim Knorr

Shape/Size

Large shrub or multi-trunk tree from 15 to 25 feet high and wide.

Leaves

Simple dark green leaves 3 to 5 inches long with small teeth on the margins. The leaves have a waxy coating that helps protect against water loss and fire damage.

Flower/Fruit

Creamy white flowers blooming May to August. Fruit is a cluster of showy red or orange berries produced late October to January. Provides a valuable source of food for wildlife, especially birds.

Range

Throughout Los Angeles County from coastal zone to the inland valleys.

Flammability – Low to Moderate.

Maintenance

The Toyon is the most desirable of the native species for aesthetics, erosion control and fire safety. Recommend limbing of lower branches (about one-third the height of the plant) and maintain free of dead material at all times.



Western Sycamore

Platanus racemosa

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Broad leaved, open crowned deciduous tree, 30 to 100 feet tall and as wide. Mottled gray/brown bark is smooth, but peels off producing a camouflaged appearance. Main trunk often divides into spreading or leaning secondary trunks with contorted branches.

Leaves

Deeply cut palmate leaves with 3 to 5 lobes, 6 to 12 inches across. Leaves are yellow-green turning dusty brown in early autumn.

Flower/Fruit

Minute clustered flower balls form into a spiny-round fruit reaching 1 inch across hanging from the tree in strings of three to four. Flowering occurs February to April.

Range

Common plant on stream banks in Los Angeles County in coastal and inland areas. Rare in the desert.

Flammability – Low.

Maintenance

Recommend removal of dead material and pruning to lift canopy off the ground.



Photo by John Aimes



White Alder

Alnus rhombifolia

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Broad leaved, open crowned deciduous tree 35 to 100 feet tall. Smooth gray-bark becoming rough with age. Very fast growing.

Leaves

Leaves are oval with serrated edges and range from 2 to 4½ inches in length. Dark green upper surface, pale green underside.

Flower/Fruit

Flowers are catkin clusters: male 1-6 inches long, females are shorter, ½ to ¾ inch long becoming woody at maturity resembling a tiny pinecone. Blooms January to April.

Range

Common plant in riparian areas and on stream-banks in Los Angeles County.

Flammability – Low.

Maintenance

Recommend removal of dead material and pruning canopy to lift off the ground.



Photo by John Aimes



White Sage

Salvia apiana

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Evergreen shrub 3 to 6 feet tall and almost as wide.

Leaves

Leaves white to gray-green. Long erect branches from the base. Young stems are square with crowded leaves at the base.

Flower/Fruit

White to pale lavender showy flowers growing in clusters (compound inflorescences) $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, blooms from March to July. Fruit forms four small nutlets separating at maturity during the summer.

Range

Widespread in dry areas below 5,000 feet in coastal sage, chaparral, and yellow pine woodland plant communities.

Flammability

Low to moderate depending on available fuel moisture.

Maintenance

Numerous root sprouts and seedlings following a fire. Little value to wildlife except for bee pollination. Recommend complete removal except on very steep erosion prone slopes.



Yerba Santa

Eriodictyon spp.

Information provided by the Forestry Division, Prevention Bureau



Photo by John Aimes

Shape/Size

Aromatic evergreen shrub from 2 to 8 feet.

Leaves

Thick, leathery or waxy leaves 2 to 6 inches long, edges coarsely toothed.

Flower/Fruit

Lavender to white tubular flowers.

Range

Chaparral and desert fringes along streams and canyons. Prevalent in dry, rocky places between 1,000 to 6,000 feet.

Flammability – Medium.

The open structure of the plant, coupled with accumulating dead leaf litter contributes to the species flammability.

Maintenance

Root sprouts after fire or cutting. Recommended removal 0 to 50 feet from structures and selected removal of individual specimens up to 200 feet.



Photo by John Aimes

